1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
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tributions. For some time before this visit, rockets were fired off at noon and at 3 p. m. and the church bells were rung about 3:45 p. m. This was to call people to confess in anticipation of the Bishop's visit.

Another activity, about which little is known, is in connection with the various societies. As indicated previously, there seems to be a degree of secrecy about the functions of these groups; undoubtedly they are primarily religious. For example, on January 3, the day of the Sacred Heart, members of the Society of the Sacred Heart spent the day in church. They wore red bands about their necks with ornaments of red ribbons and spent much of their time kneeling and in group prayers led by a maestro or lay reader. There is also reason to believe that the new priest, at least, used these groups for political purposes. Scarcely a day passed without one group or the other being summoned to a meeting at church by means of special signals on the church bells.

The majority of the people in town belong to one society or another. Rarely or never do they belong to two. The societies of Saint Joseph and of Mary are for boys and girls, respectively; when they marry they are dropped from membership. Adults belong to the other societies. Membership is by invitation only. Each society has a board of directors (*mesa directiva*) which issues the invitations. All meetings are held in the church or in the priest's quarters.

There can be little doubt that Cherán is a strongly Catholic community. During the height of the conflict between the Church and the Government, when priests were forbidden to officiate and the churches were closed,[34] Cherán residents underwent considerable risk to bring a priest to the town periodically. Many of the services were held in a private house belonging to a certain Cherán resident who was later in bitter conflict with the new priest who arrived in 1940. The minority in the town who were opposed to Church domination in political affairs did not dare to speak openly. Quotation of a statement given me by one of

[34] It will be recalled that this restriction was imposed when the Church refused to permit priests to obey the new laws requiring them to register. The real point of the conflict, of course, was in those aspects of the laws which prohibited Church schools and stripped the Church of all economic rights.

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423 A similar case was going on in Ihuatzio.
661 Here an agrarista group was formed and was trying to obtain the new shore lands, which, according to traditional use, should be distributed among all the villagers.

The opposition of the Church to the Revolution and the fact that the financing of the cult had been one of the factors that led many peasants to lose their lands brought about a strong anticlerical policy among the agraristas, who expelled the priest and forbade the cult, particularly the festivals. This connection of the agrarian movement with religion will be further discussed in the next chapter.

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423 Thus, in a small farmer-owner environ-
668 ment a new privileged minority was formed, which seized the lands of political
578 enemies or of the community, assumed control of the town administration, and
175 attacked long cherished cultural values related to religion and the church. The agraristas kept power by armed force, being organized into a local militia. Except in towns where a great majority benefited from the changes, strong opposition was always evident. During the late 'twenties there were in the area some groups of *cristeros*.[78] Cristeros were anti-agrarian peasants in revolt against the government because of its anti-church policy. The main regions of the cristero movements were those where small farmers prevailed and consequently agrarismo was weak.[79]

The political conflict became so intensified that by 1939 the government had to send small detachments of federal troops to many towns.[80] The presence of these forces undermined the control of the agrarista militia. Shortly afterwards the agraristas were driven out of some towns, new authorities were established, and the cult was again allowed to function.

At the time of our field work (1945) this movement against the agraristas had become strongly influenced by the *sinarquistas*.

668 *Sinarquismo* is a political movement strongly Catholic and nationalistic, opposed to the government and with such traits as a semi-military organization, rallies, and a peculiar salute and flag. It won its initial strength in the late 'thirties in the Bajío region near the Tarascans and gained considerable mass support among the artisans and peasants. To the peasants it plays upon the failure of the government to improve their lot. While accusing the government

78. Foster, 1948, 178.
79. For instance, Arandas: Taylor, 1933, 20-22, 28-29.
80. Beals, 1946, 112; Mendieta y Núñez, 1946, 209, 222.

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794 by commissioners (*comisionado, encargado*) named by the priest or the town council for a given task. In this case the time required is less and also the contributions, the expenses being met by the town or ward (barrio) and the commissioner acting as collector.

794 668 798 Changes in recent years have been, on the one hand, the rise of an anticlerical movement among the agraristas, aiming at suppressing the cult. On the other hand, in the conservative communities trying to preserve the cult, changes can be described in terms of the decline of the cabildo, increased intervention by the priest or town council, and the change from individual sponsor to commissioner.

* * *

The accumulation of causes giving rise to a movement against the organization of the cult and the cargos had thus been going on for a long period of time when the Mexican agrarian revolution began to be influential in Michoacan. The local participation of Tarascan villages in the movements for agrarian reform has been outlined in the previous chapter. The local agraristas became supporters of the national revolutionary governments from which they expected to receive lands. Both the national and the local situations also combined to produce an anticlerical policy on the part of the agraristas.

Social studies in Michoacan have been limited to peasant communities, and no good study is available on the haciendas and the cities. Consequently there is no good information as to the way in which the anticlerical policy of the government was evident in Michoacan. In Mexico at large the official Church has been connected with the traditional landowner class, which explains the anticlerical policies of the government. In Michoacan we can assume the same situation prevailed, for we know that the church here, too, opposed the government's agrarian reforms.[51] Anticlericalism appears on the one hand as the influence of governmental policies. On the other hand, the local situation is of paramount importance and only in those places where local conditions provided a basis for it has anticlericalism gained any stronghold.

[735] Financing the traditional cult had been the cause in many villages for Indian impoverishment and the loss of land to a few rich or to outsiders. This fact led the

51. Foster, 1948, 175.

2:Carrasco E-4, 5 (1945)1952
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668 agrarista groups to identify the cult and
794 the festivals with the land order against
798 which they were revolting. Thus the local situation tied itself up with the national anticlerical policy of the government.

The agraristas kept the priest out of town and closed the church. If it had been burned during the Revolution they did not rebuild it,[52] or they used the church and the priest's house for other functions such as social centers or schools.[53] Cargos and fiestas were forbidden as they were seen to be the causes of excessive expenditures and drunkenness.[54]

We have already presented the causes for the failure of the agraristas to maintain their power in villages where small landowners prevailed. The agraristas became [565] an exclusive privileged minority, opposed to the interest of most of the villagers. Their anticlerical policies also led them to reforms in an aspect of culture—religion and festivals—which were deeply ingrained in the traditional culture. Resistance to their economic policies thus became associated with resistance to culture change. In such conservative villages, reaction against the agraristas was always prevalent,[55] and it had a militant Catholic ideology. Even during the period of the most strongly antichurch policy of the government, some villagers managed to hide a priest,[56] and others, like Cherán, smuggled one in to say mass in private houses without the anticlerical minority's being strong enough to dare speak.[57]

791 Still in other more conservative villages the lack of a priest led not to obsolescence of religion, but to manifestations of folk religion which the priests would not have allowed. In Ocumicho, a woman called María Doncella (Mary the Maiden) claimed to have heard the voice of God in a slit stone in a ravine near the village. The news spread throughout the region and many people began to come to Ocumicho in pilgrimage. María Doncella baptized the children herself and songs were made to her in which she was called the daughter of God. Once she said that the Virgin of Cocucho had come to Ocumicho and taken the patron San Pedro with her, and she organized a procession of people to go to Cocucho and pray to have San Pedro come back. According to skeptical informants

52. Urapicho: Beals, 1946, 131.
53. Tzurumútaro, Puácuaro.
54. Sáenz, 1936, 96; Simpson, 1937, 467.
55. Sáenz, 1936, passim; Foster, 1948, 178.
56. Tzintzuntzan: Foster, 1948, 178, 234.
57. Beals, 1946, 119.

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[776] well dressed non-Indian (*catrín*). The traditional sponsorship of religious festivals (*cargos*) also disrupts the social order in the villages because of their rôle in impoverishing the sponsors. The Devil steps in to get the carguero's soul by providing the money he needs to hold the festival. The folk value of cargos prevails, however, as the saint proceeds to save the carguero.

In so far as Tarascan religion is part of the national religion, a certain national social order and certain institutions are also supported. Adherence to the priest and to the dictates of the Church indicates such an endorsement of the church's national rôle and the social order which it supports. The moment there are anticlerical groups considered devilish because of their opposition to the Church, the whole weight of this body of belief is brought against them.

Similarly, defense of property, which in terms of local culture is defense of small property, can become support of a national order based on large property (as in the story defending the hacienda owner). Sanction of poverty can mean defense of the Indian way of life against intrusion, but viewed nationally, unequal distribution of wealth is sanctioned by virtue of poverty and the social order based on it.

Tarascan ideology, then, sanctions the traditional folk culture, but conflict with the outside is evident, and the fact that the folk culture is part of a wider society means that a certain national order is also sanctioned.

B. SUPERNATURAL SANCTIONS IN SOCIAL CONFICT

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●798 In previous chapters we have examined the agrarista movement and its anticlerical character. This anticlericalism resulted on the one hand in the agrarista's connection with the national anticlerical government from which he expected to receive lands, and in the opposition met in the Church itself, which was nationally opposed to the agrarian reforms. On the other hand, the main local cause for the agrarista anticlericalism was the cargo system for the local cult organization, which exacted too much from the Indians and was in many cases responsible for the loss of their lands.

We also gave the reasons for opposition to the agraristas and for their decline in villages where small landowners prevailed, and the following success of the Catholic reaction. Within this reaction the trend

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668 against the traditional cargo system is again discernible, although this time under 798 the cloak of a more orthodox Catholicism. Thus people are divided according to their appreciation of some cultural institution: for cargos (traditionalist) or against them (agraristas and some militant Catholics); for the Church (traditionalists and militant Catholics) or aganist it (agraristas).

Since the ethical religious ideology sanctions those institutions thus in conflict, let us see how supernatural sanction of political groups is evidenced in folk narratives.

Corresponding to the general anti-agra- 183 rista trend, we find in the tales use of the good and evil theme in order to prove the 668 wickedness of the agraristas. A number of experiences in which people see the Devil take place in towns where the agraristas dominate, doubtless a reflection of the connection between the two evils.

At the time of our stay in Jarácuaro, the level of the lake was falling, leaving considerable extensions of land dry. At that time in Ihuatzio, which is strongly Catholic, an agrarista group was formed to get this land for themselves instead of sharing it with the whole town. News soon reached Jarácuaro that the Devil had been seen in Ihuatzio. The following market day in Pátzcuaro brought more complete news:

[539] [776] "In Ihuatzio they saw the Devil. He came out of the mountains and he crossed the town through the center. He looked like a human, but had feet like those of donkeys. The people wanted to hit him, but they were not able to reach him. They say he came out because many have now become agraristas. In order to get the land at the lakeshore the town has split."

A similar story is told of another town:

539 "This is what happened to a man from Tócuaro when agrarismo was so powerful. This man remembered an errand he had to do at Pichátaro and he left; this was about eleven o'clock at night. He went down right to the road and there he saw a man on horseback. They greeted each other: 'Good evening.' 'Good evening.' 'Where are you going?' 'To Pichátaro.' 'I am going to Puácuaro. Shall we travel together?' 'All right. Let's go.'

"'Where do you come from?' the stranger asked. 'I come from Tócuaro, and you?' 'Well, I am here and there, sometimes in Tzurumútaro, sometimes in San Pedro, San Bartolo or Puácuaro; those are the towns where they like me best.' 'And what about Tócuaro?' 'No, you don't like me at all; you have there an old

539 which the people had to suffer. Then God gave His permission and the Devil made the volcano at once."

• • • •

"In the plain where the volcano burst forth there was a cross which the missionary fathers had buried because there was a danger in that plain. A man from Parícutin was working that land; when he was plowing he saw the cross. He did not approve of it, he called a friend, dug, and took an arm from the cross; he chopped it off. Inside was a golden cross to keep the volcano from breaking forth. They took it out and broke a wooden cross which was on top of the golden one and the agraristas burned it. Then the volcano erupted. They say that because the people from Parícutin were so bad and broke the cross, the volcano broke out. Before the volcano broke out, little figures were seen dancing, city-clothed people (*catrines*), and also four whirlwinds. Dionisio was getting close and felt the earth was hot so he said, 'Now it is going to break out; I better go.' And he heard a noise, *fu*! and smoke came out. When he arrived home it was already roaring."

• • • •

"Once when the people of Parícutin had a land dispute with those of San Juan, a priest had told the people to gather a lot of money and bury it there. So he put the money and on top of it a cross and he blessed it because he said that to him who hurt the cross or took the money out, God would send a punishment. Some agraristas felled the cross with an axe and took the money. Shortly thereafter the volcano broke out. And that is the reason."

• • • •

"The volcano appeared because the agraristas from Parícutin had felled a cross which had Holy Hosts inside. The cross was placed by a missionary father that same year so that no water snake [tornado] would fall there. They felled it and, the day after, the volcano was there."

668 The political conflict and the agrarista
798 anticlericalism have thus produced an in-
538 crease in the use of some themes of the traditional religious ideology, namely those which point out the wickedness of the people who oppose the Church and the cult.

On the subject of cargos the folk ideology maintains that they are necessary in order to enter heaven. However, we did not find this belief elaborated upon by the more traditional people in opposition to the militant Catholics who reject the car-

2:Carrasco E-4,5 (1945)1952
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668 gos.[4] Conversely, the militant Catholics do
798 not seem to use folk ideas in order to argue
538 their stand; we simply find disbelief in the idea that the cargos have supernatural sanctions. These Catholics are supported by their priest who holds the same views.

Full agrarista material is lacking, for our collection was gathered in conservative villages. A volcano story was told by an agrarista from Charapan who had taken refuge in Cocucho. The tale demonstrates belief in religion and clearly condemns fiestas, making them the cause for the volcano, instead of blaming the agraristas as do most other stories. The agrarista policy of suppressing fiestas finds in this story a neat ideological justification:

539 "A bearded man appeared near San Juan before the eruption had started. He found a cowboy and asked him, 'Where are you going?' 'I am looking for some oxen,' he said. 'Well, haven't you seen them where you have been?' 'No, I have not.' 'Well, look here. After all, nobody is going to take them. I want you to do an errand for me. There is a hole back there where you were. Go and step on it and you will find a man. Tell him that I need him.'

"The cowboy went there, but the hole was too small to get into, so he went back to tell the bearded man. 'Sure you can get in,' he replied. 'You just step hard on it.' The boy did so and he sank. He arrived at a big house, where he told the man there what he was ordered to say: 'A bearded man sends me to tell you that he needs you.' 'What is the matter, then?' 'I don't know. I was looking for some animals when he found me and sent me on this errand.' 'Let's go then.'

"And they went out and they arrived where the bearded man was. He said that he wanted this man from the underworld to destroy the town of San Juan before the time came for the fiesta. 'But I cannot do that!' 'Sure, you can. You must destroy the town before the holy day so that no fiesta will be made.' And so they left, and the cowboy left, too, and he found the oxen where the bearded man had told him.

The bearded man was God and the other one was the Devil. God didn't want any more fiestas in San Juan, because the poor people went there and spent so much money because everything was very expensive. Besides, they were robbed even within the Church, and so the poor people were left without any money at all. That's why God destroyed everything."

4. It should be noted that no particular effort was made to obtain them. Neither, however, was an effort made to get the anti-agrarista motives which so often appeared.